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Sent: Wednesday, February 09, 2022 12:17 PM

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Subject: PSIO SITREP UPDATE #11 – 9 Feb 2022 – Freedom Convoy Solidarity Activity

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION ONLY: SUBJECT TO CHANGE AS SITUATION DEVELOPS. INFORMATION MAY BE BASED ON UNCONFIRMED REPORTING.

UPDATE #11

DATE/TIME: February 9, 2022 @ 1215 hrs

PURPOSE: To provide aggregated situational awareness regarding “Freedom Convoy” solidarity activity impacting Alberta.

BACKGROUND:

- Regional “Freedom Convoy” solidarity convoys (a.k.a. “Operation Bear Hug”), localized highway slowdowns, temporary barricades, and protest activities have occurred throughout the province since 29 Jan 2022.
- The COUTTS BORDER CROSSING and CHECK POINT 10 near MILK RIVER are currently the centre of gravity of ‘Freedom Convoy’ solidarity activity in Alberta. Participation in area remains fluid.
- Root-level organizing continues to adapt relative to developments involving the COUTTS BORDER CROSSING and OTTAWA ‘Freedom Convoy’ activities.
- As of 9 Feb, public health measures will be lifted in 3 stages as the Omicron wave subsides and pressure on the health-care system eases.

CURRENT STATUS:

Coutts Border Crossing

- As of 09:00hrs Wed 9 Feb, RCMP and Sheriff Highway Patrol (SHP) report:
 - A protest blockade was re-established at 20:00 hrs on 8 Feb following the GoA’s announcement on relaxing PHOs, and backed up traffic at Checkpoint 14.
 - RCMP were working to re-establish traffic flow. [current status unconfirmed]
 - Cattle trucks were again blocked and were staged at CP14 (Hwy.4/501 @ Milk River). These are prioritized for movement, and may be diverted through an alternate border crossing.

- Development of the alternate protest site at Milk River is ongoing. Capacity at the site will be 300+.
- RCMP have initiated an investigation into the farm tractors who bypassed a checkpoint and failed to stop for RCMP on 8 Feb.
- An organizer is attempting to gather 1000 “freedom riders” on horseback to attend COUTTS on 12 Feb 2022, including the planned establishment of a medical station. [response to relaxation of PHOs unknown at this time]

Alberta Legislature / McDougall Centre

- A protest against the removal of the Restrictions Exemption Program (REP) is planned for the evening of Wed 09 Feb.
- On Tue 8 Feb, Sheriffs reported a couple of vehicles parked near the Legislative Grounds, but no protests or convoys were observed in or near the Legislative Grounds footprint.
- Social media indicates convoys to the Legislature are being planned for 12 Feb, originating in [SHERWOOD PARK](#), [ACHESON](#), [LEDUC](#), and [WETASKIWIN](#).
- [Social media](#) indicates counter protest being planned for 10:30 hrs Sat 12 Feb at LEGISLATURE. [assessed as aspirational - low resonance at this time]

City of Edmonton & Environs

- No current activity of concern.
- On Tue 8 Feb, EPS reported a convoy of 15 small vehicles observing the rules of the road and traveling the speed limit on the ANTHONY HENDAY. This convoy was organized by the group who typically muster and step off at the ACHESON HUSKY TRUCK STOP. [Convoys have been departing ACHESON for EDMONTON daily at 1100hrs. Protest locations are unknown until the last minute.]
- On Tue 8 Feb, CoE Corporate Security advised there were no reported convoys or protests at/near EDMONTON CITY HALL.

City of Calgary & Environs

- [Social media](#) indicates daily convoys within the city of CALGARY are planned for 1800-2000hrs. [reaction to PHO relaxation unknown at this time]
- [Social media](#) continues to indicate planned resupply convoy to MILK RIVER/COUTTS to depart CALGARY by 18:00 hrs Fri 11 Feb. [no apparent change in response to PHO relaxations]

Regional Municipalities / Rural

- On Tue 8 Feb, Lacombe Police Service advised that a PONOKA convoy converged at MLA Ron ORR’s constituency offices in LACOMBE and peacefully protested.
- Social media posts have promoted local convoys or rallies on 12 Feb in RED DEER, RIMBEY,
- [Social media](#) indicates local support convoy being planned for Sat 12 Feb in FORT MCMURRAY. Intent to marshal at 11:00 hrs for 12:00 departure along previous route using same Zello channel. [reaction to PHO relaxation unknown at this time]
- [Social media](#) indicates 'Fort McMurray Supply Convoy 2022 to Ottawa' intending to depart FORT MCMURRAY for OTTAWA on Tue 15 Feb. Tentative Route EDMONTON, RED DEER, CALGARY,

SASKATOON, REGINA, WINNIPEG, KENORA, THUNDER BAY, SUDBURY. [reaction to PHO relaxation unknown at this time]

Ottawa “Freedom Convoy 2022”

- Ottawa police officers are aware of concerns about child and youth attendance at the demonstration.

Other Provinces / National

- Media reports truck blockade on Ambassador Bridge connecting Windsor, ON, with the US.

International

- Momentum is gathering in the US for a trucker convoy to WASHINGTON, DC. Organizers of the so called “People’s Convoy” are seeking to get underway in early March 2022 from CALIFORNIA. The mobilization and planning has largely occurred through online encrypted platforms. A fundraising page on GiveSendGo has been established and the effort has so far raised \$7.2 million out of a goal of \$16 million. Republican figures and politicians including Donald J TRUMP and Marjorie TALYOR-GREENE have expressed support for the convoy. The organizers are also reportedly working with ‘Freedom Fighter Nation’, a group tied to the 06 January 2021 Capitol Hill riots.
- Protestors have been gathering in southern FRANCE with the objective of launching a “Freedom Convoy” that will converge on PARIS and BRUSSELS and demand an end to COVID-19 restrictions. Many of the protestors were reported to be displaying Canadian flags.
- Protests inspired by the “Freedom Convoy” continued in both CANBERRA, AU and WELLINGTON, NZ through 09 February. The protest in NZ appears to be waning, but hundreds still remain.

MINISTRY UPDATES:

Justice & Solicitor General (JSG):

- No change.

Transportation (TRANS):

- Closure of the Border at Coutts will quickly increase impacts to cattle shipments and enhance the need to maintain extended hours and services at alternate border crossings, similar to last week.
- Traffic flows reported as of 8 Feb:

COUTTS – DAILY TOTAL NUMBER OF VEHICLES (ON HIGHWAY 4, 3 KM NORTH OF COUTTS) NOTE: DUE TO LOCATION OF TRAFFIC COUNTER IN RELATION TO PROTESTS, THESE VOLUMES DO NOT REFLECT TRAFFIC CROSSING THE BORDER	Two-Way	Southbound	Northbound
Average Weekday Traffic in January 2022	1,510	820	690

Monday, February 7, 2022	Traffic flow with RCMP escort	Traffic flow with RCMP escort	Traffic flow
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DEL BONITA – DAILY TOTAL NUMBER OF VEHICLES (ON HIGHWAY 62, 1 KM NORTH OF US BORDER)	Two-Way	Southbound	Northbound
Average Weekday Traffic in January 2022	50	25	25
Monday, February 7, 2022	210	135	75

CARWAY – DAILY TOTAL NUMBER OF VEHICLES (ON HIGHWAY 2, 2.3 KM NORTH OF US BORDER)	Two-Way	Southbound	Northbound
Average Weekday Traffic in January 2022	80	40	40
Monday, February 7, 2022	Data currently unavailable	Data currently unavailable	Data currently unavailable

Municipal Affairs:

- No change.

Jobs, Economy, and Innovation (JEI):

- Lethbridge Economic Development(LED) reports:
 - Local transportation companies are having to re-route – usually via ROOSVILLE, BC/EUREKA, MT BORDER CROSSING (BC HWY 93) due to the lack of infrastructure, IT and hours of operation at Alberta's other crossings. This creates incremental costs for new border paperwork and brokerage, incremental out of route miles, and Canada vs US hours of service issues. [CBSA (Commercial) Hours @ ROOSVILLE: 08:30-16:30 Mon-Fri, Closed Sat/Sun.]
 - LED facilitated a call last week between Minister SAWHNEY and the owner of Lethbridge Truck terminals to provide some detailed and specific examples on these issues. Minister SAWHNEY has been in touch with various municipal contacts for daily updates.
 - Local manufacturers are shifting supply routes where possible, but a number of them rely heavily on the Interstate-15/Canamex corridor so have seen some lost production shifts and ramping down of production schedules in a few cases. The usual options to re-route often involve Vancouver and that side of the supply chain is still recovering from the weather disruptions in December 2021. [The CANAMEX corridor is a series of improvements to freeways and other transportation infrastructure linking Canada to Mexico through the United States.]
 - There is considerable support for the convoy and blockade in Southern Alberta. They are able to easily re-supply fuel, food and change out participants. Local observers speculate this could drag on for some time – with ongoing economic impacts. That said,

there has been some movement of traffic over the last 4-5 days in both directions with periodic interruptions.

- The official advice is; however, to avoid the area due to the unpredictable nature of blocks and individual participants. (e.g. a U.S.-based business traveller flew to Great Falls and drove through the Coutts border to meet with a client in Lethbridge with no issues whatsoever last week and the very next day one of his peers was held up for 4 hours.)
- Local observations suggest there are roughly 100 people at the first blockade closest to Coutts on Tuesday Feb 8. On Monday Feb 7, there were an estimated 300 people at the second blockade closer to Milk River – this is good news as it is about half the size of the crowd on Saturday.
- Anecdotal information suggests home-based businesses may be impacted. As their shipping/freight forwarding service providers deal with uncertainty around shipping time and costs given border delays/re-routing, some home-based and e-commerce businesses may be pausing sales to U.S. customers until the border clears.

Agriculture, Forestry, and Rural Economic Development (AFRED):

- No change.

ASSESSMENT & STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS:

- Response to the GoA's announcement on PHO's has been mixed. Some commenters have promoted an increased protest tempo to exploit the recent change. Others have accepted it as a victory.
- Divisions within protest leadership persist. The shift from open social media platforms to private encrypted platforms indicates that protest organizers' priorities may be shifting from public appeal towards operational security.
- Organizers of a call for an 'Alberta School Wide Walk Out' on Mon 14 Feb are reevaluating this activity as a result of announced removal of youth/school masking protocols. Some supporters have claimed victory, while others express concerns regarding local School Board actions and Teacher Union's arguing "unsafe work conditions".

FORECAST:

- Online networks continue to digest the 8 Feb announcement regarding the 3 stage lifting of public health measures. The full impact of this change on future protest activities is uncertain at this time. Additional indicators are anticipated to emerge within the next 24hrs.

PREPARED BY: Intelligence Bureau, Provincial Security & Intelligence Office (PSIO)

DISTRIBUTION.

- **GOA:** EXEC: DM//COS//PO COS//PO Issues Manager | JSG: MINO COS//DM//ADSG//COS//ADM PSD//ED LEOB//ED PSIO//ED Sheriffs//DIR EM//DIR Int Bureau | TRANS: DM//ADM Planning, Procurement & Tech Stds | MA: DM | Health: DM | JEI: DM//ED Industry & Regional Rel. | AFRED: DM//ED Food Safety
- **RCMP:** KDEOC//KDCAS

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